

Maryland State Department of Education
DANCE GLOSSARY
[A hyperlink to Voluntary State Curricula](#)

AB A two part compositional form with an A theme and a B theme. The binary form consists of two distinct self-contained sections that share either a character or quality, i.e., the same tempo, movement quality, or style.

ABA A three-part compositional form in which the second section contrasts with the first section. The third section is a restatement of the first section in a condensed, abbreviated, or extended form.

Abstract Concepts Ideas that have been removed, separated from, or condensed from concrete realities, specific objects or actual instances.

Aesthetic Qualities or experience derived from or based upon the senses and how they are affected or stimulated.

Aesthetic Judgments Assessment and decision-making about the adequacy of fine art forms. (These are relative, never absolute, and depend upon the character of the form, need of the participant, and the environment.)

Aesthetic Principles Considerations that guide a choreographer in the creation of a dance: balance, climax, contrast, harmony, proportion, repetition, sequence, transition, unity, and variety.

Art Form The shape and structure of fine arts activity, the origin of the components comprising a work of art in to a distinct order; a product or process of dance, music, theatre, or visual art.

Audience Etiquette Prescribed or accepted behavior among the members of a group; accepted audience behavior for dance performance.

Awareness of Space The ability to know the location of self and others on stage; the ability to dance while maintaining the formation or line dictated by the choreography.

Balance Arrangement (symmetrical or asymmetrical) of proportionate parts so that equilibrium exists; manipulation of floor pattern, movements and dancers in relation to each other.

Body The Instrument of dance, the positions and ways the body is used in a dance.

Call-and-Response A structure in which one soloist or group performs while a second soloist or group's performance responds to or answers the first.

Canon A choreographic form that reflects the musical form of the same name in which individuals and groups perform the same movement phrase beginning at different times.

Choreographic Forms Structures that a choreographer uses in the creation of a dance such as AB, ABA, rondo, canon, theme and variation, call and response, and narrative.

Choreography The art of planning and arranging dance movements into a meaningful whole; the process of building a composition; a finished dance work

Clarity The ability to execute each step in a dance clearly and completely.

Climax Sequential arrangement to achieve a key statement or intensity; the portion of the composition given primary emphasis or representing culmination; the most intense or highest point in the development or resolution of choreography.

Collage A choreographic form that consists of a series of movement phrases that are often unrelated but have been brought together to create a single dance with a beginning, middle, and end.

Contrast Introduction of a theme or pattern different than the original that differs in a way that can serve to distinguish or intensify meaning.

Concentration The ability to focus on choreography and technical accuracy throughout a dance.

Creative Process The logical progression in the making of dance; choose topic, research the topic, identify important aspects of the topic, devise problems to be solved, ask questions, solve problems and produce material, design artwork, self-evaluate, revise, get and use feedback from performance (concept, investigation, exploration, selection, development, refinement, exhibition).

Critique A written review analyzing all aspects of dance performance.

Culture(s) The shared ideas, beliefs, customs, and experiences of a given people at a given time.

Dance Structured rhythmic movement in space and time resulting in communication of an idea, mood, feeling, or situation.

Dance Conventions Rules, methods, or practices in dance established by usage or custom.

Dance Movement Any movement used to communicate through the language of dance.

Dance Skills The large body of steps and movements associated with each genre of dance.

Dance Study Exploration of an idea through a short dance that has a beginning, middle, and end.

Elements of Dance The components present in all movement: body, space, time and energy.

Energy The amount and kind of force applied to movement.

Form in Dance The shape, structure, or contour of a composition according to a preconceived plan; the orderly arrangement of thematic material; the clarity of a movement or theme. (See [choreographic forms](#).)

Genres Types of dance, each having its own steps, style, and history.

Ground Bass A choreographic form in which a group of dancers repeat a series of simple movements while, in front, a smaller number of dancers (or soloist) perform (s) a contrasting, often more complex dance phrase.

Harmony Coordination in the interplay of forces among the various parts of a composition; consistent, orderly, or pleasing arrangement of parts.

Healthful Physical Behaviors Positive choices that contribute to a lifestyle required for dance proficiency: proper nutrition, adequate rest, conditioning, and the absence of tobacco, alcohol and other chemical substances.

Improvisation The act of creating and performing spontaneously in the fine arts.

Improvise To spontaneously explore dance movement.

Individual Dance Study A short dance for one person that explores an idea and has a beginning, middle, and end.

Kinesthetic Awareness The ability to feel and know where one's and others' bodies are in space without looking. Awareness of relative force and movement.

Language of Dance The vocabulary that dancers use to communicate, including the names of dance steps, terms used in the process of creating dance, terms used to refine dancing ability, and terms used to make aesthetic judgments about dance.

Literal Ideas Dance movement that communicates a story or message to an audience.

Locomotor Movement Movement through space involving a change in location. A moving base involving a progressive relocation of the body in space. (The basic locomotor

steps are walk, run, leap, hop, jump; irregular rhythmic combinations are skip, slide, and gallop.)

Motivational Stimuli Catalysts that encourage movement based on goals and ideas.

Movement Idea A created movement that results from a thought or other motivation.

Movement Patterns Movement composed of the elements of dance in a regular arrangement, configuration or design; a dance pattern.

Movement Phrase A sequence of dance movements making up part of a choreographic pattern. A dance phrase.

Movement Sequence Movements linked together to form a series much like words linked together to form sentences, paragraphs and essays.

Narrative A choreographic structure that follows a specific story line and intends to convey specific information through that story.

Narrative Ideas Dance movement that tells a story, a dance drama.

Non-literal Ideas Dance movement that emphasizes movement manipulation and design without the intention of telling a story. Communication directly through movement.

Non-Locomotor Movement Movement occurring above a stationary base; movement of the body around its own axis (Also called axial movement, it includes bending, stretching, pushing, pulling, bouncing, swinging, shaking, and twisting.)

Performance Competencies The abilities dancers need to enhance the way the audience views dance: projection, awareness of space, concentration, and clarity.

Physical Attributes The abilities necessary to achieve technical proficiency in dance: agility alignment, articulation, balance, endurance, flexibility, placement, power, speed, strength, and timing.

Physical Discipline The ability to maintain the physical attributes necessary to achieve technical proficiency in dance.

Projection Confident presentation of one's body and energy to vividly communicate movement and meaning to an audience.

Proportion The relationship of one part to another with respect to magnitude, quantity or degree; the quantitative selection of the component parts of a composition relative to each other in terms of their relative numbers, dimensions, temporal values, or dynamic emphasis.

Repetition Presentation of a theme or a portion of a theme a number of times for emphasis or to gain form or interest. (It assists in making a specific rhythm increasingly discernable or emphasizes significant movement patterns or themes.)

Rondo A choreographic form of three or more themes with an alternating return to the main theme (ABACADA).

Sensory Stimuli Catalysts that encourage movement based on the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch).

Sequence The plan of the movement series in a dance to provide that each movement be a logical outgrowth of that which precedes it, thereby giving continuity, meaning, and order to the dance as a whole.

Short Movement Sequences Movements linked together to form at least a 32-count sequence.

Space The area in and through which dance moves.

Style A distinctive or characteristic manner of expressing an idea. A personal mode of performing.

Technical Proficiency The ability to perform dance movement accurately and consistently, with kinesthetic awareness, and in the style of the genre or choreographer.

Theme Unifying or dominant idea in a movement pattern, sequence, or dance from which variations may be developed.

Theme and Variation A choreographic form in which a dance phrase or section of a dance is followed by subsequent phrases or sections that are variations of the original, usually for the sake of variety.

Time The rate of speed and rhythm used from the beginning to the end of a dance.

Transition Subordinate connecting intervals that weld together material within a movement theme. A connective bridge between sections or parts of a dance.

Unity The most important principle; the fusion together of the parts of a dance to heighten and strengthen the total effect; a coherent entity with all parts having a harmonious relationship that contributes to the sense of completeness.

Universal Themes Dances from a variety of cultures that share a commonality based in human experiences and that show the relationships of individuals to each other and within social groups.

Variation An amount or degree of change, a different form of a dance movement or movements.

Variety Diversity in treatment of the material within the theme of the composition; an embellishment or change in movement or theme to add interest or meaning.

World Culture(s) The shared ideas, beliefs, customs, and experiences of a given people at a given time.